

FEVER OF FREEDOM

By Julia Edwards



Today, in the United Nations Assembly, the balance of power is swinging toward the numerous, newly independent African nations. Both the East and the West are trying to win this bloc. We need Africa's friendship, support and raw materials. The Africans need our advice and technical assistance. Failure to understand what is going on in Africa can lead to disastrous consequences for the Western world. This booklet provides valuable background information about the people we are seeking to work with.

"The darkest thing about Africa has always been our ignorance of it."

—GEORGE H. T. KIMBLE,
noted British geographer



THE CONTINENT OF TRIBAL REPUBLICS

Close your eyes for a moment and say to yourself the word, "Africa!" What does it conjure up for you? Africa the exotic, the ancient, the sad, the violent... How easy it still is to make Africa of today fit our traditional image of Africa: a vast land of strange animals and of stranger people; a wild and beautiful land of romance and adventure.

Yet whatever the word may mean in *fantasy*, the *fact* of Africa is something else again. There is another Africa, one feverishly struggling for human rights and freedom. This is the Africa thousands of Europeans are leaving because they say it is cursed; this is the Africa to which

thousands of newcomers are going because they say there lies opportunity.

We must learn to see that there is another Africa because we are among the newcomers. The planes taking European colonials out of Africa are bringing in American businessmen, engineers, government and civic officials, and hundreds of Peace Corps members. The United States Government is opening embassies and information centers in newly formed republics with such strange names as Mogadiscio, Somalia, and Ouagadougou, Upper Volta. An exchange of ideas and culture is taking place. Thousands of African students are attending American colleges during the winter and working with Americans in the summer in factories and on farms. We applaud African dances on Broadway. Louis Armstrong is the rage among Africans just discovering jazz.

All this can be traced to *uhuru*—independence! Since the end of World War II, the birth of independent nations in Africa has been occurring at a phenomenal rate. July 1962 alone saw Algeria, Ruanda and Burundi take their places as independent nations. Today, counting groups of islands, there are sixty-four African nations and territories, thirty-one of which are independent states.

If the 19th century was the age of colonization in Africa, the 20th century is assuredly the age of independence. However, there has been no semi-self-governing status between these two stages. In many ways Africa resembles a child who has leapfrogged adolescence and landed flat-footed in adulthood. The result is creating profound problems, not only for Africa but for the rest of the world. *The crux of the commotion in Africa is the struggle to weld tribes into nations.* Without understanding this, we cannot understand the clash of opposing forces in Africa: political rivalries between Africans, economic rivalries among Europeans, colonialism versus independence, black versus white, communism versus capitalism.

Then, too, African nations are inheriting along with their independence some grinding 20th century paradoxes. Despite the poverty of many of its people, Africa contains vast riches. Colonial Africa has been producing 98 percent of

the diamonds of the world, 55 percent of the gold, 22 percent of the copper, large quantities of strategic materials such as manganese, chromium, uranium, and 65 percent of the world's supply of cocoa and palm oil. Africa is indeed an enormously rich land where many resources await development. But Africa, faced with chaos, needs help in every way imaginable. If we do not offer that help, the Communists will. Much of Asia is lost to the Soviets; we cannot afford to lose Africa to them as well.

AFRICA THE GIANT

"Africa is like no other part of the world, and every part of Africa differs from every other," declared *The New York Times* in describing this extraordinary giant.

After a childhood of staring at maps that distort, most of us grow up without realizing the vast size of Africa. Even today's space-age children, absorbed in rocketing to the moon, see the world through Mercator's map, a 16th century guide to navigation. These square maps of a round world contract the size of the area close to the equator and magnify the size of land far from it, so that the United States appears larger than Africa. Yet the amazing fact is that Africa is *almost four times as large as the United States*. It occupies 11½ million square miles, one-fifth of the earth's land mass—and is as big as the *United States, western Europe, India and China combined!* Its head is washed by the Mediterranean, its toe by the Antarctic; its west coast faces the Atlantic, its east coast the Indian Ocean.

There are cities in Africa as far apart as New York and Moscow. It takes as long to fly from Casablanca to Cape-town as it does from San Francisco to Tokyo. But even more astonishing than Africa's size is its diversity.

Certainly our own continent of North America is varied enough. Between the Arctic Ocean off Icy Cape, Alaska, and the soupy equatorial waters flowing through the Panama Canal live Eskimos in igloos, New Yorkers in pent-houses and Mayan Indians in the jungles of Yucatan.

Yet, in Africa there are even more extraordinary contrasts. There are diamonds in the desert and gold in the

swamps. There is the soaring, snow-peaked Kilimanjaro in Tanganyika, and the fabulous sea of sand and stone, the Sahara. The world's greatest copper mines are located in a setting of ant heaps taller than man. And, in the modern city of Nairobi, Kenya, a herd of long-necked giraffes looks disdainfully down on a traffic jam.



AFRICA'S PEOPLE—CONTRAST UPON CONTRAST

Let us consider the two hundred and forty million people of Africa. Though they are fantastically varied, it is possible to describe three main groupings: Hamites, Negroes and Bantus. Hamites are, technically, whites. Bantu is not really a racial term, but a way of grouping most Africans who are dark-skinned but not as dark as the Negroes. The Negroes are truly black Africans, but they are of many types and strains.

To get some idea of the complex relationships of these groupings, let us turn to a small mountainous region in Central Africa, just east of the Congo. Here are the newly independent states of Ruanda and Burundi in the area formerly known as Ruanda-Urundi. The area originally was a part of German East Africa, but was mandated to the Belgians after World War I. At the close of World War II, its status was altered to that of a UN trusteeship. Granted independence in July 1962, it split into twin states.

Side by side in Ruanda and Burundi live four-foot tall pygmoids, five-foot tall Bahutus, six-foot tall Belgians and seven-foot tall Watusis. The pygmoids are a mixture of Pigmy and Bahutu. The Bahutus are a branch of the Bantus. The Watusis, despite their dark coloring, are believed to be descended from Hamitic stock and are said to have migrated centuries ago from the northeast. Their culture certainly is

an ancient one, their people the most refined—and cruelest—of any in Africa. The first Europeans to penetrate Central Africa found these giants living like kings, with the Bahutu people toiling as their slaves.

Today the educated leaders of the Bahutus are insisting on equality with the Watusis. (Incidentally, the pygmoids are the only people in the area to stay outside the struggle for power. They keep to themselves and remain at peace with the world.)

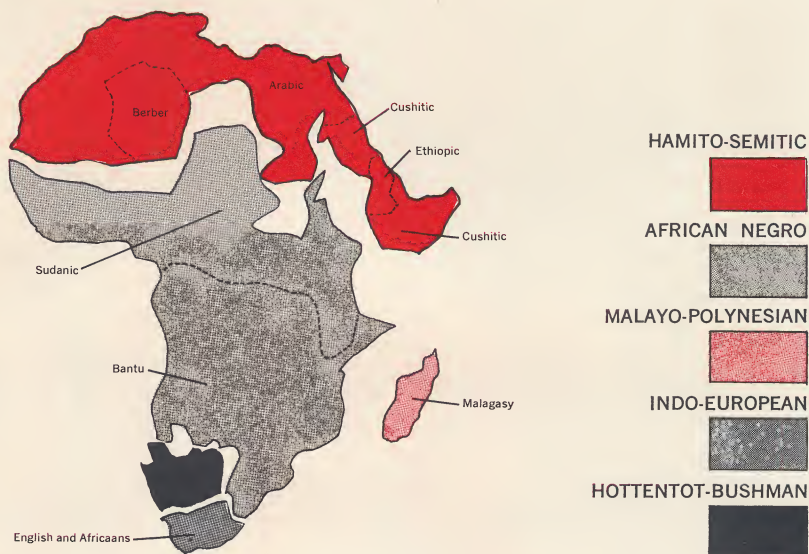
In Ruanda, the Bahutu won a UN-sponsored election and abolished the hereditary monarchy of the Watusis. Once the Watusis fell from power, the Communists came to their support. Thus we have the curious anomaly of the Soviet bloc working for the restoration of a feudal monarchy.

In Burundi, a Watusi *mwami*, or king, still rules. UN efforts to get the Watusi leaders of Burundi to form a single government with the Bahutu leaders of Ruanda have failed. Split from each other and internally divided, these two states are not likely to remain at peace for long. Similar problems of disunity plague much of Africa.

LAND OF MANY LANGUAGES, MANY CULTURES

Perhaps on no other continent can there be found so many different cultures, people and languages. There are at least 700 *main different languages*, among them 10 principal Semitic languages, 47 Hamitic, 182 Bantu and 264 Sudanese. Between 200 and 300 of these languages have recently been put into written form. However, there is no standard spelling of African words. Thus, words are spelled phonetically—and differently—in African dialects, German, English, French and Portuguese. Naturally, this fosters a great deal of inventing. For example, most of us have heard of Timbuktu, that fabled, inaccessible city in Mali, south of Algeria. But would we recognize it as spelled locally in French: *Tombouctou*? In the Watusi language, “Wa” signifies the plural. An individual of the tribe calls himself a “Tussi.” But few people outside the tribe would know what you were talking about if you mentioned meeting a Tussi. Thus, we use “Watusi” to refer to one and “Watusis” to refer to the group.

BREAKDOWN OF MAJOR AFRICAN LANGUAGE GROUPS



These differences, of course, are bits and pieces that contribute to the colorfulness of the land. For Africa is indeed a gigantic mosaic. People from many countries have brought their cultures to it. Centuries before European penetration, the Arabs built Arab cities. In the wake of exploration, French colonists built French cities, the British built English cities, the Belgians built Belgian cities. During the 19th century, Negro freedmen from the United States settled Liberia and for its capital built a city, Monrovia, that might easily have been lifted right out of Atlanta, Georgia.

MOSLEM AFRICA

Although the impact of Western civilization has been great, the Arab influence on Africa has been far greater. During the seventh century, Moslem Arabs came out of Arabia and penetrated North Africa. Until the 11th century, the vast, arid stretches of the Sahara discouraged them from settling more of Africa. But in 1076, the Moslems crossed the Sahara and pushed into West Africa, where they

AFRICA



YEAR INDICATES WHEN NATION GAINED INDEPENDENCE

established an empire. Shortly thereafter, they swept down along the eastern coast, crossed the equator and continued southward. The Arabian influence is apparent in cities like Zanzibar, with its eternal fragrance of cloves, and Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika, with its picturesque, palm-fringed harbor. Today, millions of black Moslems live in a wide belt of pasture land along the eastern shelf of Africa. Many have Arab profiles, even though their skin coloring is dark. Visitors to the UN in New York are often astonished to see so many "black Arabs" representing Africa. In culture, language and dress, these people belong to the Moslem world.

RELIGIONS OF AFRICA

(Millions of Members)

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

MOSLEM 38%

PRIMITIVE 32%

CHRISTIAN* 14%

HINDU less than 1%

JEWISH less than 1%

CONFUCIAN less than 1%

TAOIST less than 1%

OTHERS OR NONE 15%

* Roman Catholic	21,461,000
Protestant	6,795,262
Eastern Orthodox	5,868,089



As a matter of fact, much of Africa's population or nearly one third, is Moslem. Eighty-nine million people in Africa today are Moslems, 35 million are Christians, 75 million belong to primitive religions, and a remaining 40 million adhere to other beliefs.

THE SLAVE COAST

When we think of West Africa, we fall back on a few conventional historical memories: We recall the great bulge

around the Gulf of Guinea, and in particular the coastal strip where European explorers and adventurers first landed. The nature of Europe's association with West Africa is implicit in its early name: *the Slave Coast*. By the 17th century, European powers were doing a thriving business in slaves. The people were rounded up like cattle, thrown into dark, airless holds of filthy vessels, and those who survived were delivered to plantations in America and the Caribbean. Business was so good, so immensely profitable that the "product" soon became known as "black ivory."

But let us also remember that these people, whose slavery paid off so handsomely, could boast of a tradition of learning and culture dating back centuries before Christ. Nigeria, in the heart of the Slave Coast, was once the seat of a great, early civilization. Moreover, when most of our ancestors were barbarians, Nigeria's sculptors were creating magnificent statues, and her philosophers were contemplating the immortality of men. It is something to think about that long before Europeans set foot in Africa, African artists of the Nigerian cities of Benin and Ife were forging fabulous sculptures in metal. Some of these very works are now on display in museums in New York and London.

The great walled city of Kano in northern Nigeria was built 500 years before Columbus discovered America. Centuries before such cities as Berlin and Tokyo existed, Kano was well known in Europe as the terminus of a famed caravan route, the destination of the world's most adventurous merchants, the dream city of Arab chronicles.

Today, Nigeria is still a remarkable place. It crowds 35 million inhabitants into an area just slightly larger than Texas and Oklahoma. Although it won its independence from Britain in 1960, in a matter of months Nigeria managed to achieve a relatively stable form of government. Hailed as the greatest of all Negro nations, Nigeria assuredly is the most populous country in all Africa. If it can continue to meet the needs of its multitudes, it may well set a pattern of self-government that other African nations can follow.

To the west is Ghana, a country that became independent before Nigeria. On the memorable day of March 6, 1957,

the simple name itself became the cry for freedom. "Ghana!" all colonial Africa shouted. Unfortunately, within the boundaries of Ghana, the meaning of freedom soon died away. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, its ruler, soon established what is virtually a dictatorship. The tribes along the southern coast of Ghana readily follow him. But Nkrumah has been able to control the strong Ashanti tribe in central Ghana only by dissolving its organization and imprisoning its leaders.



WIND OF UNREST

The Congo sounds as familiar to most of us as the infamous Slave Coast, for this is Africa's Africa, the "heart of darkness." The man who opened the Congo for Europe was the same Henry M. Stanley who found a missing missionary and uttered the legendary greeting, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

The Congo, formerly a Belgian colony, is immense. It is as large as all of the United States east of the Mississippi. Yet, for all its vastness, only 13½ million people live there. The Congo territory gained her independence in 1960, but it was the independence of a hornet's nest knocked free of its supporting limb. Rival factions threatened to break up the nation. Although the UN warded off complete anarchy, it was powerless to prevent such violence as the murder of Patrice Lumumba, leader of one of the factions.

The war is over, but the province of Katanga, where Lumumba was killed, continues to be a trouble spot. Katanga seceded and the UN is presently attempting to persuade this province to accept a federal union with the rest of the Congo.

To the southwest, bordering the Congo, is war-torn Angola, a colony the Portuguese have held in an iron grip for 500 years. The pressures against this rigid rule exploded in the 1961 uprising against the Portuguese. Today civil war continues, as the African battles to have some say about his welfare and political destiny. The Portuguese are fighting to keep Angola, and they assert: "If we give them independence, conditions will get worse." There is, perhaps, more than a grain of truth in this assertion.

In the swift change-over from European rule to African, African leaders have had great difficulty keeping their fledgling governments and economies alive. Independence may be a concept for many of the educated leaders of Africa; but for people so recently governed by the tribe, independence is a *condition*—and instant independence often an extremely painful condition to experience.

Still, the fight for *uhuru* goes on. In cities in the south, Africans are trying to rid themselves of European control—and yet, at the same time, they struggle to live like Europeans. Modernistic hotels and traffic jams, European food and Western dress are the order of the day. Some Africans in these cities are wealthier and better educated than the black Moslems in the north. This is not always apparent on the surface. For, while the European has brought Africa the benefits of industry and medical care he has also brought it the plague of the urban slum. Also, by compelling the African to conform to 20th century ways, he has ruptured the cell life of the tribe.

At first Europeans had to force Africans to come to the cities to work. Today, the influx to the cities goes on even though work is scarce, and most Africans are either unemployed or underemployed. Many are worse off than they were in their native villages, but they huddle in crowded hovels and cling to hope.

It is not too surprising that anti-colonialism was born in the very cities that the Europeans built. For the leaders of the independence movement in Africa were educated by Europeans and prospered under their rule. However, once armed with education, Africans living and working in the shadow of the European came to grips with injustices they

had formerly ignored. This stirred the movement for independence.

British Tanganyika, Uganda, Kenya, and the isle of Zanzibar are cases in point. In these places, a handful of British once held a tight grip on millions of Africans. The whites educated a small African élite, who, in turn, educated other Africans to the fact that they were being exploited. Kenya exploded in 1953 with the Mau Mau terror. This violence lasted until 1958. No matter what we may feel about the Mau Mau uprising, it did force the beginning of independence in East Africa. For, today Kenya and Zanzibar are partially self-governing, while Tanganyika achieved independence in December 1961, and Uganda in October 1962.

THE AFRIKANERS

South Africa was one of the new nations whose independence has brought somewhat different tensions. Originally settled 300 years ago by the Dutch, who established their own language—Afrikaans, a debased form of Dutch—and government. The Afrikaners were defeated by the British in the Boer War at the turn of the century, and the British took over. Today the Afrikaners are back in the saddle with policies far more oppressive than were those of many a colonial power. The policy of apartheid, defined as “separateness,” prevails. The system has resulted in complete subjugation of the African by the whites, and wherever possible segregation of white from black.

South Africa is considered a “white settler” country. There are more whites congregated here than in any other country in Africa. The ratio of white to black is much higher—about one to four. This may help to explain why the Afrikaner, with his substantial settlements, seems determined to resist transfer of responsibility to the African.

South Africa’s leading metropolis is Johannesburg, called Jo’burg by its inhabitants. This brash, opulent city is the second largest after Cairo. It is a golden, lush town, full of skyscrapers, swimming pools—and slums. It has more industry than all the other areas of Africa put together. This land, at the toe of Africa, is rich indeed. Rich—and inflexible. And thus revolt—should it come—could release violence worse than any perpetrated by the Mau Mau terror.

THE AFRICA YOU WILL KNOW

Colonialism in Africa is dying; in some places it is dying hard. But, as daily news reports remind us, granting a nation sovereignty does not insure it political stability. This is the chief problem independent Africa faces. Tribal rivalries persist and threaten to shatter many parts of Africa into fragments. Katanga is at odds with the rest of the Congo; Ruanda and Burundi are splintered states; Zanzibar in East Africa is torn between its Arab and African populations, and Uganda is threatened by serious tribal and regional problems.

In Kenya the future looks no brighter. When the British eventually leave, they will have to turn their prosperous lands over to the Kenya government. When this happens, rival tribes may grab for this rich prize and set off a civil war.

For, the African Revolution is not only against colonial governments, but against Africa herself. Old tribal patterns are being shattered as new governments are being formed. Under tribal law, responsibility resided in the community; life was governed by a code of behavior that regulated almost every act. Western order, on the other hand, is based on the individual's respect for the law. In attempting to solve problems created by this situation, many new African governments are being forced to fall back on totalitarian methods.

With few exceptions, the people of Africa endure appalling poverty. This must be overcome, and each African nation must learn to develop its resources. Simultaneously, the educational lag must also be dealt with—for almost 90 percent of the people are illiterate. To accomplish all these things, the African nations need leadership from within, technical and economic assistance from without.

Today, the future of this vast land seems marked for independence. Still, we must remember that we cannot expect to see Africa achieve the sort of democratic government we have here. At least not for a long, long time. As one African said, "It took the West nearly two thousand years to evolve its present system of democracy. Why begrudge Africa fifteen or twenty years?"

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